

Capitalization

Capitalization of words can often be tricky and confusing. A good rule of thumb is that words are capitalized if they are unique persons, places, or things, or if, in a title, they are important. Of course, all sentences begin with a capital letter, as well. Proper nouns and proper adjectives are always capitalized. They fall most often into the following categories:

Category	Example	Notes
Particular people	Eleanor Roosevelt Confucius	
Organizations	United Nations Yellowstone National Park	
Calendar names: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Days of the week • Months of the year • Holidays • NOT seasons 	Monday, Tuesday January, March Martin Luther King Day winter, spring, summer	
Geographical names	Bay of Biscay Nile River New York State Boston	
Building names	Empire State Building Sears Tower	
Directions which refer to a region, not a way to go	Maine is in the Northeast Drive northeast on the old highway.	Often regions which should be capitalized are preceded by "the."
Group names <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political parties • Religious sects • Nations • Ethnic origin groups 	Republicans Presbyterians Nigeria Bulgarian	
Government body and department names	the Senate Department of Education	The "little words," like "of" are not capitalized
Historic names <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Periods • Documents 	American Revolution Age of Innocence Magna Carta	
Titles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titles before proper names • High government titles without names • College degrees • NOT most titles without names 	Captain Hook President of the United States Bachelor of Arts degree a group of representatives	
Words of family relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family names when used as specific person's name • Relationship names when used before a proper name • NOT relationship names not naming a person 	The cake belongs to Dad . My Uncle Bill is a fireman. Her aunt works at the elementary school	Family names are not capitalized after possessive pronouns. For example: My mom told me to ask my dad if he wanted to go out to eat.

<p>Solar system names</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planets Stars Satellites usually Not sun and moon 	<p>Mars, Venus, Pluto North Star Telstar</p>	
<p>Trade names</p>	<p>Buick car Sony television</p>	<p>Notice that the name, not the item is capitalized</p>
<p>School subjects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language course Specific course Words in a course that need to be capitalized NOT general courses 	<p>French, Latin II History I American history</p> <p>geography, science</p>	
<p>Titles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books Articles Poems Plays Newspapers Television shows Radio programs 	<p>Pride and Prejudice "The Vietnam War" "Ode to a Grecian Urn" <u>Arsenic and Old Lace</u> The New York Times "Dharma and Greg" "The Garrison Keiller Show"</p>	<p>Note that prepositions and articles are NOT capitalized. See Quotations and Underlining for rules about what to underline or surround with quotations</p>

Other capitalization rules:

<p>Capitalize first words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first word of a sentence A quoted sentence A line of poetry or verse 	<p>The Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico.</p> <p>"Give me liberty," said Patrick Henry, "or give me death."</p> <p>Alone and warming his five wits, The white owl in the belfry sits. -Alfred, Lord Tennyson</p>	<p>Note: "Give" begins with a capital letter because it begins a quotation. The second part of the quotation is not capitalized because it does not begin the quote or a new sentence.</p>
<p>Letters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salutations Closings 	<p>Dear Mr. Watson, My dear Mrs. Washington,</p> <p>Yours, Very truly yours,</p>	
<p>I, O</p>	<p>The winner is I. O, the day has begun!</p>	
<p>Outlines</p>	<p>I. Dinosaurs A. Brontosaurus 1. Food</p>	

Taken from <<http://www.eliterateeducation.com/site/capitalization.htm>>